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Activities (UNFPA)

Mexico, D. F., 3 to 7 March 1975

REPORT OF THE ADVISORY PANEL CONVENED  
BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF ECLA  
(Mexico City, 1 and 2 March 1975)

Note by the secretariat

The Executive Secretary has pleasure in submitting to the participants in the Second Latin American Meeting on Population - as a supplement to the documents relating to items 5 and 6 of the agenda - the report of the Advisory Panel which was convened immediately before the Meeting. In view of the calibre of the experts who were invited to participate in the Group and the positive outcome of the discussion that took place, the Executive Secretary trusts that this brief report will provide a useful guide for the debate on the items referred to.

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## I. OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE ADVISORY PANEL

### 1. Objectives

1. In order to hear suggestions and propose additional guidelines for the consideration of the items to be discussed at the Second Latin American Meeting on Population, the Executive Secretary of ECLA decided to convene an Advisory Panel composed of regional experts representing various fields of study and with experience in population matters.

### 2. Place, date and participants

2. The meeting of the Advisory Panel was held at the Mexico Office of ECLA on 1 and 2 March 1975.

3. The Executive Secretary had invited the following experts:

Jorge Arias de Blois	(Guatemala)
Sergio Chaparro Ruiz	(Chile)
Jorge García Duque	(Venezuela)
Isaac Kerstenezky	(Brazil)
Luisa María Leal	(Mexico)
Carlos Noriega	(Argentina)
George Roberts	(Jamaica)
Hector Sardiña P.	(Cuba)

4. For reasons beyond their control, the representatives of Brazil, Guatemala and Venezuela were unable to attend.

3. Organization of work

5. The participants agreed to ask Mrs. Luisa Maria Leal (Mexico) to act as moderator and to have the report of the meeting drafted by the secretariat.

6. The Executive Secretary of ECLA submitted the following documents, prepared for the Second Latin American Meeting on Population, for the consideration of the Panel:

Latin America: Demographic situation around 1973  
and prospects for the year 2000 (ST/CEPAL/Conf. 54/L.2)  
(Spanish only)

Development and population in Latin America: A  
summary diagnosis (ST/CEPAL/Conf. 54/L.3)

Implications for Latin America of the World Action  
Plan (ST/CEPAL/Conf. 54/L.4).

Prospects for action in the field of population in  
Latin America. *The contribution of the regional  
agencies* (ST/CEPAL/Conf. 54/L.5)

7. The Panel decided to concentrate on documents L.4 and L.5, bearing in mind also the reports of the meetings in San José and Bucharest.

8. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Panel decided to transmit the observations and recommendations set forth in the following pages to the Executive Secretary of ECLA so that he could submit them as his discretion, to the Second Latin American Meeting of Population as a supplement to the documents prepared by ECLA and CELADE.

## II. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ADVISORY PANEL

### 1. General

9. Since, at the Latin American Preparatory Meeting in Costa Rica and at the World Population Conference, the countries of Latin America were able to establish clearly their positions of principle regarding the relationship between population and development, the Panel considered it extremely important that the Second Latin American Meeting on Population, should make further progress and concentrate on defining and co-ordinating action in the specific field of population, within the general context of the relevant proposals in the World Population Plan of Action (WPPA).

10. The Panel emphasized that the foregoing recommendation did not mean overlooking the fact that "the basis for an effective solution of population problems is, above all, socio-economic transformation", that "a population policy may have a certain success if it constitutes an integral part of socio-economic development" (WPPA, paragraph 1) and that, in its turn, this "development is directly linked to the transformation of international economic relations and to the establishment of a new economic order" (resolution XVII of the World Population Conference).

11. Consequently, the Panel felt that, in the particular case of Latin America, the formulation of guidelines for action in the specific field of population involves taking into account the nature of the structural origins of the region's underdevelopment and the real, fundamental obstacles to progress.

### 2. The value framework

12. With regard to the implications of the WPPA for Latin America, as described in the documents prepared by the secretariat, the Panel first turned its attention to the proposals of an ethical and juridical nature set forth in the Plan and constituting the value framework for population policies.

13. The Panel accordingly emphasized the importance, within the value framework, that should attach to:

- (a) the basic human right of all couples and individuals "to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children and to have the information, education and means to do so"; 1/
- (b) the right of women "to complete integration in the development process particularly by means of an equal access to education and equal participation in social, economic, cultural and political life". 2/

### 3. Instruments for a population policy

14. The Panel went on to analyse the normative proposals relating to institutional instruments in the field of population, at both the national and international level, and the suggestions for action. It accordingly agreed to propose that the Executive Secretary should transmit the recommendations set forth in the following paragraphs to the Second Latin American Meeting on Population.

#### a) Population policies

15. The Panel stressed that, without prejudice to international solidarity, the countries of the region should exercise their sovereignty and adopt national population policies as an integral part of their economic and social development policies. 3/ In view of the particular nature of population dynamics and of its interrelationships with socio-economic structures and processes, countries should adopt a long-term approach to their population policies, anticipating future demographic trends and taking appropriate

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1/ WPPA, paragraph 14 (f).

2/ WPPA, paragraph 14 (h).

3/ See WPPA, paragraph 14.

decisions and actions in their plans for economic and social development well in advance; if these trends were to be modified. They should also give thought to economic and social measures that would not only meet the increasing demands imposed by population growth but also ensured a real and significant improvement in the quality of life of the people. 4/

b) Establishment of units responsible for population policies

As regards this subject, the following recommendation was formulated:

16. The Panel, considering that, at the Latin American Preparatory Meeting for the World Population Conference, the Governments maintained that population policies should be linked with development strategies; that the WPPA recommends that population measures and programmes should be integrated into comprehensive social and economic plans and programmes; that this integration should be reflected in the goals, instrumentalities and organizations for planning within the countries; that, in order to achieve the objective referred to, the WPPA suggests that a unit dealing with population aspects of development should be created and placed at a high level of the national administrative structure; and that such a unit, in addition to formulating population policy, should have the authority to ensure its effective implementation by the competent bodies and to evaluate it periodically,

Recommends

1. That, taking account of their own administrative structures, the countries of the region which have not yet done so, should set up high-level councils, commissions or other equivalent units, empowered to co-ordinate action in the field of population, which could perform the following functions:

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4/ See WPPA, paragraph 13.

a) Formulate comprehensive population policies integrated into the economic and social development strategies and plans and adopting an over-all approach to the various components of population dynamics;

b) Ensure the timely implementation by the competent bodies of the policy adopted;

c) Carry out periodic evaluations of its implementation and results;

d) Promote the production of statistical and research data to provide the factual and scientific basis for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies, and set up systems of communication with statistical services and national research centres;

e) Promote and programme the training of the personnel necessary for preparing the data and studies referred to, and for the efficient implementation of the programmes adopted;

f) Establish systems of communication with the competent international agencies so as to ensure the optimum use of their technical and financial assistance capacity;

2. That, in order to perform these functions, the proposed units should have the following characteristics:

a) Representatives of the various bodies involved in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies should be included in their staff;

b) The units should have a functional relationship with policy-making bodies with a view to ensuring the integration of population policies into economic and social development strategy and plans;

c) Their level of operation should be such as to ensure the co-ordinated implementation by the competent bodies of the decisions adopted;

3. That countries which have already set up councils, commissions or other equivalent units should examine their structure and operation in the light of



the foregoing considerations and, if necessary, take the action necessary to provide them with an institutional structure and the resources which will enable them to ensure the effective implementation of the objectives defined;

4. That the competent international agencies, in particular ECLA and CELADE, should develop their capacity to provide technical assistance in the establishment and operation of the proposed units, giving priority to:

a) the development of methodologies for the purpose of incorporating demographic variables into economic and social planning and into the formulation and evaluation of population policies, and

b) the high-level training of national personnel who could be used to staff the various units and ensure their effective operation and continuity;

5. That the financial agencies, in particular UNFPA, should give priority to the allocation of funds for ensuring countries effective financial assistance in the setting up and operation of the units recommended.

#### 4. Inputs for a population policy

##### a) Statistical information

17. In considering the inputs for population policies, the Panel turned its attention first to requirements in terms of statistical data and reached the conclusion that, in spite of the concern of the countries and international agencies involved in improving demographic data, in order to formulate population policies, supervise their implementation and evaluate their results, there is a clear need to improve the quantity, quality, coverage, periodicity, and timeliness of the data required.

18. The Panel also considered that to meet the such needs efforts should be made to:

a) Ensure greater continuity in the work of preparing, taking and publishing censuses;

b) Test new methods for carrying out census operations, including the acquisition of new types of data;

c) Review existing machinery for the formulation of international recommendations in the carrying out of censuses, with the aim of introducing the necessary changes, so that such recommendations may emerge, account being taken of the different national circumstances and of the need for the data necessary for formulating, implementing and evaluating population policies which would at the same time enable comparative inter-country analyses to be made;

d) Establish regular channels for consultation between producers and users in order to ensure that the information provided is suited to the needs of the latter; and

e) Promote the exchange of experiences in this field between countries.

19. The Panel underscored the need to improve and develop the periodic inter-censal data required as a basis for the formulation of population policies, and in particular for their follow-up and evaluation. It recommended that countries should give particular attention to obtaining such data from population sample surveys. The existence of such periodic data will enable the United Nations to carry out the work of reviewing, evaluating and following up population trends and policies assigned to it by the WPPA (paragraphs 107-109).

b) Research

20. In considering research requirements for the formulation and evaluation of population policies in Latin America, the Panel recommended that:

i) Priority should be given here to research aimed at establishing the inter-relationships between population and development in specific historical contexts, particularly where this would make it possible to

identify the effects produced and to anticipate probable future effects of different modes or patterns of development on population dynamics;

ii) Social research relevant to the formulation and evaluation of population policies in the relatively less developed countries should be encouraged, and the regional agencies urged to provide technical assistance to such countries as a matter of priority;

iii) Bearing in mind resolution XV of the World Population Conference, the Latin American countries should urge UNFPA to step up its financial assistance to social research programmes in Latin America.

c) Training

21. In connection with training, it was recommended that the maximum possible use should be made of the various national institutional resources available in the region. To that end, the international agencies should be urged to play an active role in the acquisition and utilization of these resources. This would make it possible to create better conditions for according priority to training in different fields in Latin America.

22. Another aspect considered by the Panel was the direction and content of the different modes of training which should be in keeping with the individual requirements and particular features of the countries. Consequently, the Panel considered that it was incumbent on Governments and universities to evaluate these requirements and the way in which the personnel trained should be used and fitted into their structures.

23. While appreciating the work done by the Latin American training centres and institutes, the Panel drew attention to the need for additional programmes in some areas. At the same time, the national units responsible for basic training should act accordingly by modifying and expanding some university training programmes.

24. In the light of the foregoing considerations, the Panel recommended that:

1. On the basis of the institutional resources existing in the region, a co-ordinated supply of training opportunities should be organized at the country and international agency level; this would make it possible to satisfy certain requirements preferably within Latin America itself.

2. Governments and national academic institutions should attend to the need to train personnel in specific specialized fields and should recognize the role which the new specialists are called on to play within the system and units connected with the formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies.

3. The regional agencies, CELADE and ILPES in particular, should intensify their action in some fields, where there is a lack of suitably qualified personnel, for example:

a) in the advanced training of high-level planners in matters connected with the interaction of demographic and economic and social development phenomena;

b) in the training of senior level professionals in population studies.

4. National units, especially universities, should include subjects connected with population, the environment and development in their pregraduate and post-graduate curricula. Similar action should be taken in the secondary-level centres.

##### 5. International co-operation

25. The Panel reviewed the role of international co-operation in matters connected with the formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies; it considered it advisable to underscore the advantages of multilateral over bilateral co-operation systems, when the latter involve private co-operation agencies, and thought it desirable to create or strengthen regional instruments for promoting and assisting in the priority utilization of multilateral systems.

26. The Panel agreed to recommend that private national and institutional co-operation agencies should endeavour to channel their assistance via multilateral machinery and thus ensure that the objectives sought through this co-operation would be consistent with those laid down by the countries themselves for national development and regional integration.
27. It was also considered that it would be of particular importance to seek the most appropriate institutional and procedural methods of inducing Governments to play a more direct and effective part in determining technical assistance requirements at the regional level and in formulating the action programmes of the international agencies operating in Latin America.
28. With regard to the need for a larger volume of financial resources for population programmes in the region, the Panel formulated the following recommendation:

The Panel, considering the repeated references by countries to the importance of the principle of international solidarity in their mutual relations, reconfirmed at the World Population Conference, Further considering the joint efforts being made by the Latin American countries with a view to the best possible utilization of their resources, capacities and experience, which is already reflected in the existence of multinational agencies and integration agreements at the regional and sub-regional level, and Bearing in mind also that it is necessary to ensure adequate financial support for the regional programmes which are being initiated, and the different situations observed in the region as regards levels of economic development and availability of financial resources,

Recommends that countries at a relatively more advanced stage of economic development should explore the possibility of providing the appropriate Latin American agencies with financial support for the implementation of regional population programmes, thereby benefiting the Latin American countries in general and the relatively less developed among them in particular.

29. The Panel deemed it advisable to urge that, as an additional manifestation of the principle of international solidarity, steps should be taken to promote greater co-operation among the countries of the region, in order that these initiating action in population matters may benefit from the assistance of countries with more experience in this field.
30. Proceeding further with its discussion of matters bearing on the role of international co-operation, the Panel considered that, moving on from the milestones represented by the conferences and meetings at San José, Bucharest and Mexico City, the regional institutions -particularly ECLA and CELADE- should make a major effort to provide an effective answer to the demands generated in the various countries in respect of population matters.
31. There was also a consensus to the effect that such an expansion in the scope of activities, besides entailing adjustments in the actual structures of the institutions concerned, would necessitate the establishment of expeditious, convenient and specific machinery for communication with the countries, through which ECLA and CELADE could receive from Governments the guidelines required for formulating and developing their programmes in accordance with the requirements and priorities indicated by the countries themselves.

32. The Panel further considered that the establishment of such machinery would enable the various countries to work together more closely in channelling the financial resources available in them and in the region; in the orientation of technical assistance programmes; in the periodical evaluation of the results obtained; and in promoting co-ordination at the regional level between countries and between international agencies engaged in population activities.

#### 6. Objectives and goals of population policies

33. In analysing those questions, the Panel stressed with regard to the establishment of the goals and objectives of population policies, that it was more important to formulate and put into effect the instrumentalities for achieving them, than to define them specifically.
34. Emphasis was also laid on the fact that population goals should be established within the context of the more comprehensive objectives laid down for economic and social development.

#### 7. Prospects for action

35. When considering the prospects for action in population matters in Latin America and the contribution of the regional agencies, and especially when analysing some critical situation in this connexion, the Panel drew a distinction between situations resulting mainly from the inter-action of socio-economic and political structures inherent in particular modes of development, with specific demographic structures, and those arising from the difficulty of responding effectively to the demand for services, deriving to a larger extent from population dynamics.

36. Among the former situations - in addition to those referred to in the documentation submitted by the secretariat - the Panel deemed it important to include that connected with the distortions and anomalies of the structure and patterns of consumption, which was a reflection of the particular mode of development prevailing in Latin America. Among the latter situations it referred in particular to education, health and housing and related services.
37. The members of the Panel agreed to draw attention to the need for both types of situation to be given equal attention by Governments and international agencies.
38. With regard to the consideration of international migrations as a critical situation in the region, it was pointed out that, in the case of certain territories with a high population density, such migrations had had a positive effect, by easing the pressure on resources. It was none the less recognized that population movements of that type had resulted in a significant loss of skilled human resources.
39. On that subject, the Panel took note of the fact that the Meeting on Science, Technology and Development in Latin America (Mexico City, December 1974) had adopted a resolution on the outflow of skilled personnel from Latin America to the developed countries, requesting the ECLA secretariat to prepare a report on various matters pertaining to this problem. The Panel deemed it appropriate to suggest to the Executive Secretary that the report in question should include a study of possible ways and means of compensating for the loss sustained by countries as a result of this outflow of professionals.



40. Focusing on the specific action for which the regional agencies would be responsible, the Panel considered that the programme submitted amply responded to the most urgent requirements in terms of studies, technical assistance and training, which could be met through international co-operation.
41. It urged ECLA and CELADE to make the findings of the proposed research available progressively to the various countries with a view to providing a basis for the action they might take, it being understood, however, that the initiation of certain urgent action should not be conditional on the availability of those studies.
42. The Panel further stressed that, if the aforementioned work was to be effective as a basis for taking specific action which was generally of an urgent nature, it was essential to specify time-limits in the programme consistent with that urgency.
43. In order to fulfil that objective, the Panel considered it of the utmost importance to ensure adequate financial support so that the proposed programme could be fully implemented.
44. Turning to the specific measures which should be adopted by the various countries - and as a means of moving ahead in the area of population policy - the Panel considered that it was vitally important to intensify, at the national level, such studies as would make it possible to identify the areas in which the adoption of specific measures was most urgent.